Lectionary General Introduction

Prologue

Chapter I
General Principles for the Liturgical Celebration of the word of God

1. Preliminaries

a Importance of the word of God in a liturgical celebration

1. Vatican Council II,[1] the teaching of the popes,[2] and various postconciliar documents of the Roman congregations[3] have already made many excellent statements about the importance of the word of God and about reestablishing the use of Scripture in every celebration of the liturgy. The Introduction of the 1969 edition of the Order of Readings for Mass has clearly stated and briefly explained some of the more important principles.[4]

On the occasion of this new edition of the Order of Readings for Mass, requests have come from many quarters for a more detailed exposition of the same principles, In response, this expanded and more helpful arrangement of the Introduction first gives a general statement on the close relationship between the word of God and the liturgical celebration,[5] then deals in greater detail with the word of God in the celebration of Mass, and, finally, explains the precise structure of the Order of Readings for Mass.

b Terms used to refer to the word of God

2. For the sake of clear and precise language on this topic, a definition of terms might well be expected as a prerequisite. Nevertheless this Introduction will simply use the same terms employed in conciliar and postconciliar documents. Furthermore it will use 'sacred Scripture' and 'word of God' interchangeably throughout when referring to the books written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, thus avoiding any confusion of language or meaning.[6]

c Significance of the word of God in the liturgy

3. The many riches contained in the one word of God are admirably brought out in the different kinds of liturgical celebrations and liturgical assemblies, This takes place as the unfolding mystery of Christ is recalled during the course of the liturgical year, as the Church's sacraments and sacramentals are celebrated, or as the faithful respond individually to the Holy Spirit working within them.[7] For then the liturgical celebration, based primarily on the word of God and sustained by it, becomes a new event and enriches the word itself with new meaning and power. Thus in the liturgy the Church faithfully adheres

to the way Christ himself read and explained the Scriptures, beginning with the 'today' of his coming forward in the synagogue and urging all to search the Scriptures.[8]

2. Liturgical Celebration of the Word of God

a. Proper character of the word of God in the liturgical celebration

4. In the celebration of the liturgy the word of God is not voiced in only one way[9] nor does it always stir the hearts of the hearers with the same power, Always, however, Christ is present in his word;[10] as he carries out the mystery of salvation, he sanctifies us and offers the Father perfect worship.[11]

Moreover, the word of God unceasingly calls to mind and extends the plan of salvation, which achieves its fullest expression in the liturgy. The liturgical celebration becomes therefore the continuing, complete, and effective presentation of God's word.

That word constantly proclaimed in the liturgy is always, then, a living, active word[12] through the power of the Holy Spirit. It expresses the Father's love that never fails in its effectiveness toward us.

b . The word of God the plan of salvation

5. When in celebrating the liturgy the Church proclaims both the Old and New Testament, it is proclaiming one and the same mystery of Christ.

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old; the Old Testament comes fully to light in the New.[13] Christ himself is the centre and fullness of all of Scripture, as he is of the entire liturgy.[14] Thus the Scriptures are the living waters from which all who seek life and salvation must drink.

The more profound our understanding of the liturgical celebration, the higher our appreciation of the importance of God's word. Whatever we say of the one, we can in turn say of the other, because each recalls the mystery of Christ and each in its own way causes that mystery to be ever present.

c. The word of God in the liturgical participation of the faithful

6. In celebrating the liturgy, the Church faithfully echoes the Amen that Christ, the mediator between God and humanity, uttered once for all as he shed his blood to seal God's new covenant in the Holy Spirit.[15]

When God shares his word with us, he awaits our response, that is, our listening and our adoring 'in Spirit and in truth' (John 4:23). The Holy Spirit makes our response effective, so that what we hear in the celebration of the liturgy we carry out in the way we live: 'Be doers of the word and not hearers only' (James 1:22).

The liturgical celebration and the faithful's participation receive outward expression in actions, gestures, and words. These derive their full meaning not simply from their origin in human experience but from the word of God and the economy of salvation, their point of reference. Accordingly, the faithful's participation in the liturgy increases to the degree that as they listen to the word of God spoken in the liturgy they strive harder to commit themselves to the Word of God made flesh in Christ. They endeavour to conform their way of life to what they celebrate in the liturgy, and then in turn to bring to the celebration of the liturgy all that they do in life.[16]

3. The Word of God in the Life of the 'People of the Covenant'

a. The word of God in the Church's life

7. In the hearing of God's word the Church is built up and grows, and in the signs of the liturgical celebration God's many wonderful, past works in the history of salvation are symbolically presented anew. God in turn makes use of the assembly of the faithful who celebrate the liturgy in order that his word may speed on in triumph and his name be exalted among all peoples.[17]

Whenever, therefore, the Church, gathered by the Holy Spirit for liturgical celebration,[18] announces and proclaims the word of God, it has the experience of being a new people in whom the covenant made in the past is fulfilled. Baptism and confirmation in the Spirit have made all the faithful messengers of God's word because of the grace of hearing they have received, They must therefore be the bearers of the same word in the Church and in the world, at least by the witness of their way of life

The word of God proclaimed in the celebration of his mysteries does not address present conditions alone but looks back to past events and forward to what is yet to come Thus God's word shows us what we should hope for with such a longing that in this changing world our hearts will be set on the place of our true joy.[19]

b. How the word of God is proposed in the Church

8 By Christ's own will there is an ordered diversity of members in the new people of God and each has different duties and responsibilities toward the word of God Accordingly. the faithful listen to God's word and dwell on its meaning, but only those expound the word of God who have the office of teaching by virtue of ordination or who have been entrusted with exercising that ministry.

This is how in teaching, life, and worship the Church keeps alive and passes on to every generation all that it is, all that it believes. Thus with the passage of the centuries. the Church is ever to advance toward the fullness of divine truth until God's word is wholly accomplished in it.[20]

c Connection between the word of God proclaimed and the working of the Holy Spirit

9. The working of the Holy Spirit is needed if the word of God is to make what we hear outwardly have its effect inwardly Because of the Holy Spirit's inspiration and support, the word of God becomes the foundation of the liturgical celebration and the rule and support of all our life.

The working of the Holy Spirit precedes, accompanies, and brings to completion the whole celebration of the liturgy But the Spirit also brings home[21] to each person individually everything that in the proclamation of the word of God is spoken for the good of the whole assembly of the faithful In strengthening the unity of all, the Holy Spirit at the same time fosters a diversity of gifts and furthers their multiform operation

d. Close relationship between the word' of God and the mystery of the eucharist

10. The church has honoured the word of God and the eucharistic mystery with the same reverence, although not with the same worship, and has always and everywhere intended and endorsed such honour. Moved by the example of its Founder, the Church has never ceased to celebrate his paschal mystery by coming together to read 'in all the Scriptures the things written about him' (Luke 24:27) and to carry out the work of salvation through the celebration of the memorial of the Lord and through the sacraments, 'The preaching of the word is necessary for the sacramental ministry For the sacraments are sacraments of faith and faith has its origin and sustenance in the word.[22]

The Church is nourished spiritually at the table of God's word and at the table of the eucharist:[23] from the one it grows in wisdom and from the other in holiness. In the word of God the divine covenant is announced; in the eucharist the new and everlasting covenant is renewed. The spoken word of God brings to mind the history of salvation; the eucharist embodies it in the sacramental signs of the liturgy.

It can never be forgotten, therefore, that the divine word read and proclaimed by the Church in the liturgy has as its one goal the sacrifice of the New Covenant and the banquet of grace, that is, the eucharist. The celebration of Mass in which the word is heard and the eucharist is offered and received forms but one single act of divine worship.[24] That act offers the sacrifice of praise to God and makes available to God's creatures the fullness of redemption,

Part One
The Word of God in the Celebration of Mass

Chapter II
Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word at Mass

1. Elements of the Liturgy of the Word and their Rites

11. 'Readings from Scripture and the chants between the readings form the main part of the liturgy of the word. The homily, profession of faith, and general intercessions or prayer of the faithful expand and complete this part of the Mass.'[25]

a Biblical readings

12. In the celebration of Mass the biblical readings with their accompanying scriptural chants may not be omitted, shortened, or, worse still, replaced by nonbiblical readings.[26] For it is from the word of God handed down in writing that even now 'God is speaking to his people,[27] and it is from the continued use of Scripture that the people of God, docile to the Holy Spirit under the light of faith, receive the power to be Christ's living witnesses before the world,

13. The reading of the gospel is the high point of the liturgy of the word, For this the other readings, in their established sequence from the Old to the New Testament, prepare the assembly

14. A speaking style on the part of the readers that is audible, clear, and intelligent is the first means of transmitting the word of God properly to the assembly. The readings, taken from the approved editions,[28] may be sung in a way suited to different languages. This singing, however, must serve to stress the words, not obscure them. On occasions when the readings are in Latin, they are to be sung to the melody given in the *Ordo cantus Missae*.[29]

15. There may be concise introductions before the readings, especially the first. The style proper to such comments must be respected, that is, they must be simple, faithful to the text, brief, well prepared, and properly varied to suit the text they introduce.[30]

16. In a Mass with a congregation the readings are always to be proclaimed at the lectern.[31]

17. Of all the rites connected with the liturgy of the word, the reverence due to the gospel reading must receive special attention.[32] Where there is a Book of the Gospels that has been carried in by the deacon or reader during the entrance procession.[33] it is most fitting that the deacon or a priest, when there is no deacon, take the book from the altar[34] and carry it to the lectern. He is preceded by servers with candles and incense or other symbols of reverence that may be customary. As the faithful stand and acclaim the Lord, they show honour to the Book of the Gospels, The deacon who is to read the gospel, bowing in front of the one presiding, asks and receives the blessing. When no deacon is present, the priest, bowing before the altar, prays quietly: *Almighty God, cleanse my heart…*[35]

At the lectern the one who proclaims the gospel greets the people, who are standing, and announces the reading as he makes the sign of the cross on forehead, mouth, and breast. If

incense is used, he next incenses the book, then reads the gospel. When finished, he kisses the book, saying the appointed words quietly.

Even if the gospel itself is not sung, it is appropriate for *The Lord be with you*, *A reading from the holy gospel…*, and at the end *This is the Gospel of the Lord* to be sung, in order that the assembly may also sing its acclamations. This is a way both of bringing out the importance of the gospel reading and of stirring up the faith of those who hear it.

18. At the conclusion of the other readings, *This is the word of the Lord* may be sung, even by someone other than the reader; all respond with the acclamation. In this way the gathered assembly pays reverence to the word of God it has listened to in faith and gratitude.

b Responsorial psalm

19. The responsorial psalm, also called the gradual, has great liturgical and pastoral significance because it is 'an integral part of the liturgy of the word.'[36] Accordingly, the people must be continually instructed on the way to perceive the word of God speaking in the psalms and to turn these psalms into the prayer of the Church. This, of course, 'will be achieved more readily if a deeper understanding of the psalms, in the meaning in which they are used in the liturgy, is more diligently promoted among the clergy and communicated to all the faithful by means of appropriate catechesis.'[37]

A brief remark may be helpful about the choice of the psalm and response as well as their correspondence to the readings.

20. As a rule the responsorial psalm should be sung. There are two established ways of singing the psalm after the first reading: responsorially and directly. In responsorial singing, which, as far as possible, is to be given preference, the psalmist or cantor of the psalm sings the psalm verse and the whole congregation joins in by singing the response, In direct singing of the psalm there is no intervening response by the community; either the psalmist or cantor of the psalm sings the psalm alone as the community listens or else all sing it together.

21. The singing of the psalm, or even of the response alone, is a great help toward understanding and meditating on the psalm's spiritual meaning.

To foster the congregation's singing, every means available in the various cultures is to be employed. In particular use is to be made of all the relevant options provided in the Order of Readings for Mass[38] regarding responses corresponding to the different liturgical seasons,

22. When not sung, the psalm after the reading is to be recited in a manner conducive to meditation on the word of God.[39]

The responsorial psalm is sung or recited by the psalmist or cantor at the lectern.[40]

c Acclamation before the reading of the Gospel

23, The Alleluia or, as the liturgical season requires, the verse before the gospel, is also a 'rite or act standing by itself.'[41] It serves as the assembled faithful's greeting of welcome to the Lord who is about to speak to them and as an expression of their faith through song.

The Alleluia or the verse before the gospel must be sung and during it all stand. It is not to be sung only by the cantor who intones it or by the choir, but by the whole congregation together.[42]

d Homily

24. Through the course of the liturgical year the homily sets forth the mysteries of faith and the standards of the Christian life on the basis of the sacred text, Beginning with the Constitution on the Liturgy, the homily as part of the liturgy of the word[43] has been repeatedly and strongly recommended and in some cases it is obligatory. As a rule it is to be given by the one presiding.[44] The purpose of the homily at Mass is that the spoken word of God and the liturgy of the eucharist may together become 'a proclamation of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation, the mystery of Christ.'[45] Through the readings and homily Christ's paschal mystery is proclaimed; through the sacrifice of the Mass it becomes present.[46] Moreover Christ himself is also always present and active in the preaching of his Church.[47]

Whether the homily explains the biblical word of God proclaimed in the readings or some other text of the liturgy,[48] it must always lead the community of the faithful to celebrate the eucharist wholeheartedly, 'so that they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith.'[49] From this living explanation, the word of God proclaimed in the readings and the Church's celebration of the day's liturgy will have greater impact. But this demands that the homily be truly the fruit of meditation, carefully prepared, neither too long nor too short, and suited to all those present, even children and the uneducated.[50]

At a concelebration, the celebrant or one of the concelebrants as a rule gives the homily.[51]

25. On the prescribed days, that is. Sundays and holydays of obligation, there must be a homily in all Masses celebrated with a congregation, even Masses on the preceding evening.[52] There is also to be a homily in Masses with children and with special groups.[53]

A homily is strongly recommended on the weekdays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter season for the sake of the faithful who regularly take part in the celebration of Mass; also on other feasts and occasions when a large congregation is present.[54]

26. The priest celebrant gives the homily either at the chair, standing or sitting, or at the lectern.[55]

27. Any necessary announcements are to be kept completely separate from the homily; they must take place following the prayer after communion.[56]

e Silence

28. The liturgy of the word must be celebrated in a way that fosters meditation; clearly, any sort of haste that hinders reflectiveness must be avoided. The dialogue between God and his people taking place through the Holy Spirit demands short intervals of silence, suited to the assembly, as an opportunity to take the word of God to heart and to prepare a response to it in prayer.

Proper times for silence during the liturgy of the word are, for example, before this liturgy begins, after the first and the second reading, after the homily.[57]

f. Profession of faith

29. The symbol or profession of faith, said when the rubrics require, has as its purpose in the celebration of Mass that the gathered faithful may respond and give assent to the word of God heard in the readings and through the homily, and that before they begin to celebrate

in the eucharist the mystery of faith they may call to mind the rule of faith in a formulary approved by the Church.[58]

g. General intercessions or prayer of the faithful

30. Enlightened by God's word and in a sense responding to it, the assembly of the faithful prays in the general intercessions as a rule for the needs of the universal Church and the local community, for the salvation of the world and those oppressed by any burden, and for special categories of people.

The celebrant introduces the prayer; the deacon, another minister, or some of the faithful may propose intentions that are Short and phrased with a measure of flexibility. In these petitions 'the people, exercising their priestly function, make intercession for all,'[59] with the result that, as the liturgy of the word has its full effects in them, they are better prepared to proceed to the liturgy of the eucharist.

31. For the general intercessions the celebrant presides at the chair and the intentions are announced at the lectern.[60]

The congregation takes part in the general intercessions while standing and by saying or singing a common response after each intention or by silent prayer.[61]

2. Aids to the Proper Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word

a Place for proclaiming the word of God

32. There must be a place in the church that is somewhat elevated, fixed, and of a suitable design and nobility. It should reflect the dignity of God's word and be a clear reminder to the people that in the Mass the table of God's word and of Christ's body is placed before them.[62] The place for the readings must also truly help the people's listening and attention during the liturgy of the word. Great pains must therefore be taken, in keeping with the design of each church, over the harmonious and close relationship of the lectern with the altar.

33. Either permanently or at least on occasions of greater solemnity, the lectern should be decorated simply and in keeping with its design.

Since the lectern is the place from which the ministers proclaim the word of God, it must of its nature be reserved for the readings, the responsorial psalm, and the Easter proclamation (Exsultet) The lectern may rightly be used for the homily and the general intercessions, however, because of their close connection with the entire liturgy of the word. It is better for the commentator, cantor, or director of singing, for example, not to use the lectern.[63]

34. In order that the lectern may properly serve its liturgical purpose, it is to be rather large, since on occasion several ministers must use it at the same time. Provision must also be made for 'the readers to have enough light to read the text and, as required, to have sound equipment enabling the congregation to hear them without difficulty.

b Books for proclamation of the word of God

35. Along with the ministers, the actions, the lectern, and other elements, the books containing the readings of the word of God remind the hearers of the presence of God speaking

to his people. Since, in liturgical celebrations the books too serve as signs and symbols of the sacred, care must be taken to ensure that they truly are worthy and beautiful.[64]

36. The proclamation of the gospel always stands as the high point of the liturgy of the word. Thus the liturgical traditions of both the East and the West have consistently continued to preserve some distinction between the books for the readings. The Book of the Gospels was always designed with the utmost care and was more ornate and shown greater respect than any of the other books of readings. In our times also, then, it is very desirable that cathedrals and at least the larger, more populous parishes and the churches with a larger attendance possess a beautifully designed Book of the Gospels, separate from the other book of readings. For good reason it is the Book of the Gospels that is presented to the deacon at his ordination and that is laid upon the head of the bishop-elect and held there at his ordination.[65]

37. Because of the dignity of the word of God, the books of readings used in the celebration are not to be replaced by other pastoral aids, for example, by leaflets printed for the faithful's preparation of the readings or for their personal meditation.

Chapter III

Offices and Ministries in the Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word within Mass

1. Function of the One Presiding at the Liturgy of the Word

38. The one presiding at the liturgy of the word brings the spiritual nourishment it contains to those present, especially in the homily. Even if he too is a listener to the word of God proclaimed by others, the duty of proclaiming it has been entrusted above all to him. Personally or through others he sees to it that the word of God is properly proclaimed. He then as a rule reserves to himself the task of composing comments to help the people to listen more attentively and to preach a homily that fosters in them a richer understanding of the word of God.

39. The first requirement for one who is to preside over the celebration is a thorough knowledge of the structure of the Order of Readings so that he will know how to inspire good effects in the hearts of the faithful. Through study and prayer he must also develop a full understanding of the coordination and connection of the various texts in the liturgy of the word, so that the Order of Readings will become the source of a sound understanding of the mystery of Christ and his saving work.

40. The one presiding is to make ready use of the various options provided in the Lectionary regarding readings, responses, responsorial psalms, and gospel acclamations;[66] but he is to do so with the agreement[67] of all concerned and after listening to the faithful in regard to what belongs to them.[68]

41. The one presiding exercises his proper office and the ministry of the word of God also as he preaches the homily.[69] In this way he leads his brothers and sisters to an affective knowledge of holy Scripture. He opens their souls to gratitude for the wonderful works of

God. He strengthens their faith in the word that in the celebration becomes a sacrament through the Holy Spirit. Finally, he prepares them for a fruitful reception of communion and invites them to embrace the demands of the Christian life.

42. The one presiding is responsible for preparing the faithful for the liturgy of the word on occasion by means of introductions before the readings.[70] These comments can help the gathered assembly toward a better hearing of the word of God, because they enliven the people's faith and their desire for good. He may also carry out this responsibility through other persons, the deacon, for example, or a commentator.[71]

43. As he directs the general intercessions and through their introduction and conclusion connects them, if possible, with the day's readings and the homily, the one presiding leads the faithful toward the liturgy of the eucharist.[72]

2. Role of the Faithful in the Liturgy of the Word

44, Christ's word gathers the people of God as one and increases and sustains them. 'This applies above all to the liturgy of the word in the celebration of Mass: there is an inseparable union between the proclamation of the death of the Lord, the response of the people listening, and the offering through which Christ has confirmed the New Covenant in his blood. The people share in this offering by their inner intentions and the reception of the sacrament.'[73] For 'not only when things are read "that were written for our instruction" (Romans 15:4), but also when the Church prays or sings or acts, the faith of those taking part is nourished and their minds are raised to God, so that they may offer him their worship as intelligent beings and receive his grace more abundantly.'[74]

45. In the liturgy of the word, the congregation of the faithful still today receives from God the word of his covenant through the faith that comes by hearing. The faithful must respond to that word in the same faith so that more and more they may become the people of the New Covenant.

The people of God have a spiritual right to receive abundantly from the treasury of God's word. Its riches are presented to them through use of the Order of Readings, the homily, and pastoral efforts.

For their part, the faithful at the celebration of Mass are to listen to the word of God with an inward and outward reverence that will bring them continuous growth in the spiritual life and draw them more deeply into the mystery they celebrate.[75]

46. As a help toward celebrating the memorial of the Lord with devotion, the faithful should be keenly aware of the one presence of Christ in both the word of God – 'it is he who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church' – and 'especially under the eucharistic elements.'[76]

47. To be received and integrated into the life of Christ's faithful, the word of God demands a living faith.[77] Hearing the word of God unceasingly proclaimed arouses that faith.

The Scriptures, and above all in their liturgical proclamation, are the source of life and power. As Paul attests, the Gospel is the saving power of God for everyone who believes.[78] Love of the Scriptures is therefore the force that renews the entire people of God.[79] All the faithful without exception must therefore always be ready to listen gladly to God's word.[80] When this word is proclaimed in the Church and put into living practice, it enlightens the faithful through the working of the Holy Spirit and draws them into the entire mystery

of the Lord as a reality to be lived.[81] The word of God reverently received moves the heart and its desires toward conversion and toward a life filled with both individual and community faith,[82] since God's word is the sustenance of the Christian life and the source of the prayer of the entire Church.[83]

48. The close connection between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the eucharist in the Mass should prompt the faithful to be present right from the beginning of the celebration,[84] to take part attentively, and to dispose themselves to hear the word, especially by learning beforehand more about Scripture. That same connection should also awaken in them a desire for a liturgical understanding of the texts read and for the willingness to respond through singing.[85]

When they hear the word of God and reflect deeply on it, the faithful receive the power to respond to it actively with full faith, hope, and charity through prayer and self-giving, and not only during Mass but in their entire Christian life.

3 Ministries in the Liturgy of the Word

49. Liturgical tradition assigns responsibility for the biblical readings in the celebration of Mass to ministers: to readers and the deacon. But when there is no deacon or another priest present, the priest celebrant is to read the gospel[86] and when there is no reader present, all the readings.[87]

50. The deacon's part in the liturgy of the word at Mass is to proclaim the gospel, sometimes to give the homily, as occasion suggests, and to propose the intentions of the general intercessions to the people.[88]

51 'The reader has his own proper function in the eucharistic celebration and should exercise this even though ministers of a higher rank may be present.'[89] The reader's ministry, which is conferred through a liturgical rite, must be held in respect. When there are instituted readers available, they are to carry out their office at least on Sundays and major feasts, especially at the principal Mass of the day. These readers may also be given responsibility for assisting in the planning of the liturgy of the word, and, to the extent necessary, of seeing to the preparation of others of the faithful who may be appointed on a given occasion to serve as readers at Mass.[90]

52. The liturgical assembly truly requires readers, even those not instituted. Proper measures must therefore be taken to ensure that there are qualified laypersons who have been trained to carry out this ministry.[91] Whenever there is more than one reading, it is better to assign the readings to different readers, if available.

53. In Masses without a deacon, the function of announcing the intentions for the general intercessions is to be assigned to the cantor, particularly when they are to be sung, to a reader, or to another person.[92]

54. During the celebration of Mass with a congregation a second priest, a deacon, and an instituted reader must wear the distinctive vestment of their office when they go to the lectern to read the word of God. Those who carry out the ministry of reader just for the occasion or even regularly but without institution may go to the lectern in ordinary attire that is in keeping with local custom.

55. 'It is necessary that those who exercise the ministry of reader, even if they have not received institution, be truly qualified and carefully prepared so that the faithful may develop a warm and living love for Scripture from listening to the sacred texts read.[93]

Their preparation must above all be spiritual, but what may be called a technical preparation is also needed. The spiritual preparation presupposes at least a biblical and liturgical formation. The purpose of their biblical formation is to give readers the ability to understand the readings in context and to perceive by the light of faith the central point of the revealed message. The liturgical formation ought to equip the readers to have some grasp of the meaning and structure of the liturgy of the word and of the significance of its connection with the liturgy of the eucharist. The technical preparation should make the readers more skilled in the art of reading publicly, either with the power of their own voice or with the help of sound equipment,

56. The psalmist, that is the cantor of the psalm, is responsible for singing, responsorially or directly, the chants between the readings - the psalm or other biblical canticle, the gradual and Alleluia, or other chant. The psalmist may, as occasion requires, intone the Alleluia and verse.[94]

For carrying out the function of psalmist it is advantageous to have in each ecclesial community laypersons with a talent for singing and correct diction. The points made about the formation of readers apply to cantors as well.

57, The commentator also fulfills a genuine liturgical ministry, which consists in presenting to the assembly of the faithful, from a suitable place, relevant explanations and comments that are clear, of marked simplicity, meticulously prepared, as a rule written out, and approved beforehand by the celebrant.[95]

Part Two
Structure of the Order of Readings for Mass

Chapter IV
General Plan of the Readings for Mass

1. Pastoral Aim of the Order of Readings for Mass

58. On the basis of the intention of Vatican Council II, the Order of Readings provided by the Lectionary of the Roman Missal has been composed above all for a pastoral purpose. To achieve this aim, not only the principles underlying this new Order of Readings but also the lists of texts that it provides have been discussed and revised over and over again, with the cooperation of a great many experts in exegesis, pastoral studies, catechetics, and liturgy from all parts of the world. The Order of Readings is the fruit of this combined effort.

The prolonged use of this Order of Readings to proclaim and explain sacred Scripture in the eucharistic celebration will, it is hoped, prove to be an effective step toward achieving the objective stated repeatedly by Vatican Council II.[96]

59. The decision on revising the Lectionary for Mass was to draw up and edit a single, rich, and full Order of Readings that would be in complete accord with the intent and prescriptions of the Council.[97] At the same time, however, the Order was meant to be of a kind that would meet the requirements and usages of particular Churches and liturgical assemblies.. For this reason, those responsible for the revision took pains to safeguard the liturgical tradition of the Roman Rite, but valued highly the merits of all the systems of selecting, arranging, and using the biblical readings in other liturgical families and in certain particular Churches. The revisers made use of those elements that experience has confirmed, but with an effort to avoid certain shortcomings found in the preceding form of the tradition.

60. The present Order of Readings for Mass, then, is an arrangement of biblical readings that provides the faithful with a knowledge of the whole of God's word, in a pattern suited to the purpose. Throughout the liturgical year, but above all during the seasons of Easter, Lent, and Advent, the choice and sequence of readings are aimed at giving the faithful an ever-deepening perception of the faith they profess and of the history of salvation.[98] Accordingly, the Order of Readings corresponds to the requirements and interests of the Christian people.

61. The celebration of the liturgy is not in itself simply a form of catechesis, but it does contain an element of teaching. The Lectionary of the Roman Missal brings this out[99] and therefore deserves to be regarded as a pedagogical resource aiding catechesis.

This is so because the Order of Readings for Mass aptly presents from Scripture the principal deeds and words belonging to the history of salvation. As its many phases and events are recalled in the liturgy of the word, the faithful will come to see that the history of salvation is contained here and now in the representation of Christ's paschal mystery celebrated through the eucharist.

62. The pastoral advantage of having in the Roman Rite a single Order of Readings for the Lectionary is obvious on other grounds. All the faithful, particularly those who for various reasons do not always take part in Mass with the same assembly, will everywhere be able to hear the same readings on any given day or in any liturgical season and to reflect on the application of these readings to their own circumstances. This is the case even in places that have no priest and where a deacon or someone else deputed by the bishop conducts a celebration of the word of God.[100]

63. Pastors may wish to respond specifically from the word of God to the concerns of their own congregations. Although they must be mindful that they are above all to be the heralds of the entire mystery of Christ and the Gospel, they may rightfully use the options provided in the Order of Readings for Mass. This applies particularly to the celebration of a ritual or votive Mass, a Mass in honour of the saints, or one of the Masses for various needs and occasions. In the light of the general norms, special faculties are granted for the readings in Masses with particular groups.[101]

2. Principles used in drawing up the Order of Readings for Mass

64, To achieve the purpose of the Order of Readings for Mass, the parts have been selected and arranged in such a way as to take into account the sequence of the liturgical seasons and the hermeneutical principles discovered and formulated through contemporary biblical research.

It was judged helpful to state here the principles guiding the composition of the Order of Readings for Mass.

a Selection of texts

65 The course of readings in the Proper of Seasons is arranged as follows. Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord present the more important biblical passages. In this way the more significant parts of God's revealed word can be read to the assembly of the faithful within a reasonable period of time. Weekdays present a second series of texts from Scripture and in a sense these complement the message of salvation explained on Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord. But neither series in these main parts of the Order of Readings the series for Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord and for weekdays - depends on the other. The Order of Readings for Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord extends over three years; for weekdays, over two. Thus each runs its course independently of the other.

The course of readings in other parts of the Order of Readings is governed by its own rules. This applies to the series of readings for celebrations of the saints, ritual Masses, Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, or Masses for the dead.

b Arrangement of the readings for Sundays and Solemnities of the Lord

66. The following are features proper to the readings for Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord:

1. Each Mass has three readings: the first from the Old Testament, the second from an apostle (that is, either from a letter or from Revelation, depending on the season), and the third from the gospels. This arrangement brings out the unity of the Old and

New Testaments and of the history of salvation, in which Christ is the central figure, commemorated in his paschal mystery.

2, A more varied and richer reading of Scripture on Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord results from the three-year cycle provided for these days, in that the same texts are read only every fourth year.[102]

3, The principles governing the Order of Readings for Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord are called the principles of 'harmony' and of 'semicontinuous reading.' One or the other applies according to the different seasons of the year and the distinctive character of the particular liturgical season.

67. The best instance of harmony between the Old and New Testament readings occurs when it is one that Scripture itself suggests. This is the case when the teaching and events recounted in texts of the New Testament bear a more or less explicit relationship to the teaching and events of the Old Testament. The present Order of Readings selects Old Testament texts mainly because of their correlation with New Testament texts read in the same Mass, and particularly with the gospel text.

Harmony of another kind exists between texts of the readings for each Mass during Advent, Lent, and Easter, the seasons that have a distinctive importance or character.

In contrast, the Sundays in Ordinary Time do not have a distinctive character. Thus the texts of both the apostolic and gospel readings are arranged in an order of semicontinuous reading, whereas the Old Testament reading is harmonized with the gospel.

68. The decision was made not to extend to Sundays the arrangement suited to the liturgical seasons mentioned, that is, not to have an organic harmony of themes designed to aid homiletic instruction. Such an arrangement would be in conflict with the genuine conception of liturgical celebration. The liturgy is always the celebration of the mystery of Christ and makes use of the word of God on the basis of its own tradition, guided not by merely logical or extrinsic concerns but by the desire to proclaim the Gospel and to lead those who believe to the fullness of truth.

c. Arrangement of the readings for weekdays

69. The weekday readings have been arranged in the following way:

1. Each Mass has two readings: the first is from the Old Testament or from an apostle (from a letter or Apocalypse), and during the Easter season from Acts; the second, from the gospels.
2. The yearly cycle for Lent has its proper principles of arrangement, which take into account the baptismal and penitential themes of this season.
3. The cycle for the weekdays of Advent, the Christmas season, and the Easter season is also yearly and the readings thus remain the same each year. 4. For the thirty-four weeks of Ordinary Time, the gospel readings are arranged in a single cycle, repeated each year. But the first reading is arranged in a two-year cycle and is thus read every other year. Year I is used during odd-numbered years; Year II, during even-numbered years.

Like the Order for Sundays and the solemnities of the Lord, then, the weekday Order of Readings is governed by similar application of the principles of harmony and of semi continuous reading, especially in the case of seasons with their own distinctive character.

d. Readings for celebrations of the saints

70. Two groups of readings are provided for celebrations of the saints:

    1. The Proper of Saints provides the first group, for solemnities, feasts, or memorials and particularly when there are proper texts for such celebrations. Sometimes in the Proper, however, there is a reference to the most appropriate among the texts in the Commons as the one to be given preference.
    2. The commons of Saints provide the second, more extensive group of readings. There are, first, appropriate texts for the different classes of saints (martyrs, pastors, virgins, etc,), then a great many texts that deal with holiness in general. These are for alternative use whenever the Commons are indicated as the source for the choice of readings.

71. As to their sequence, all the texts in this part of the Order of Readings appear in the order in which they are to be read at Mass. Thus the Old Testament texts are first, then the texts of an apostle, followed by the psalms and verses b~tween the readings, and finally the texts from the gospels. The rationale of this arrangement is that, unless otherwise noted, the celebrant may choose at will from such texts, in view of the pastoral needs of the assembly taking part in the celebration.

e. Readings for ritual Masses, Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead

72. For ritual Masses, Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead, the texts for the readings are arranged as just described, that is, many texts are grouped together in the order of their use, as in the Commons of Saints.

f. Main criteria applied in choosing and arranging the readings

73. In addition to the guiding principles already given for the arrangement of readings in the individual parts of the Order of Readings, others of a more general nature are;

1 Reservation of some books on the basis of the liturgical season

74. In this Order of Readings, some biblical books are set aside for particular liturgical seasons on the basis of both the intrinsic importance of subject matter and liturgical tradition. For example, the Western (Ambrosian and Hispanic) and Eastern tradition of reading Acts during the Easter season is respected. This usage results in a clear presentation of how the Church derives the beginning of its entire life from the paschal mystery. Another tradition of both the West and the East that is retained is the reading of the Gospel of John in the latter weeks of Lent and in the Easter season.

    Tradition assigns the reading of Isaiah, especially the first part, to Advent. Some texts of this book, however, are read during the Christmas season, to which 1 John is also assigned.

2 Length of texts

75. A *via media* is followed in regard to the length of texts. A distinction has been made between narratives, which require reading a fairly long passage but which usually hold the people's attention, and texts that should not be lengthy because of the profundity of their teaching.

In the case of certain rather long texts, longer and shorter versions are provided to suit different situations. The editing of the shorter version has been carried out with great caution.

3. *Difficult texts*

76. In readings for Sundays and solemnities, texts that present real difficulties are avoided for pastoral reasons. The difficulties may be objective, in that the texts themselves raise complex literary, critical, or exegetical problems; or, at least to a certain extent, the difficulties may lie in the faithful's ability to understand the texts. But there could be no justification for depriving the faithful of the spiritual riches of certain texts on the grounds of difficulty if its source is the inadequacy either of the religious education that every Christian should have or ofthe biblical formation that every pastor should have. Often a difficult reading is clarified by its correlation with another in the same Mass.

4. *Omission of texts*

77. The omission of verses in readings from Scripture has at times been the practice in many liturgical traditions, including the Roman. Admittedly such omissions may not be made lightly, for fear of distorting the meaning of the text or the intent and style of Scripture. Yet on pastoral grounds it was decided to continue the tradition in the present Order of Readings, but at the same time to ensure that the essential meaning of the text remained intact. One reason for the decision is that otherwise some texts would have been unduly long. It would also have been necessary to omit completely certain readings of high spiritual value for the faithful because those readings include some verse that is unsuitable pastorally or that involves truly difficult problems.

3. Principles to be Followed in the use of the Order of Readings

a. Options in the choice of some texts

78. The Order of Readings sometimes leaves it to the celebrant to choose between alternative texts or to choose one from the several listed together for the same reading. The option seldom exists on Sundays, solemnities, or the greater feasts in order not to obscure the proper character of the particular liturgical season or needlessly interrupt the semi continuous reading of some biblical book. On the other hand, the option is given readily in celebrations of the saints, in ritual Masses, Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead.

These options, together with those indicated in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the *Ordo cantus Missae*,[103] have a pastoral aim. In planning the liturgy of the word, then, the priest should consider 'the general spiritual good of the assembly rather than his personal outlook. He should be mindful that the choice of texts is to be made in consultation with the ministers and others who have a function in the celebration and should listen to the faithful in regard to the parts that more directly belong to them.'[104]

1. *The two readings before the gospel*

79. In Masses assigned three readings, the three are to be used. If, however, for pastoral reasons the conference of bishops has permitted use of only two readings,[105] the choice between the two first readings is to be made in such a way as to safeguard the Church's intent to

instruct the faithful more completely in the mystery of salvation. Thus, unless the contrary is indicated in the text of the Lectionary, the reading to be chosen as the first reading is the one that is closer to the theme of the gospel, or, in accord with the intent just mentioned, that is more helpful toward a coherent catechesis over an extended period, or that preserves the semi continuous reading of some biblical book.[106]

2. Long and short forms of texts

80. A pastoral criterion must also guide the choice between the longer and shorter forms of a text. The main consideration must be the capacity of the hearers to listen profitably either to the longer or to the shorter reading; or to listen to a more complete text that will be explained through the homily.

3. When two texts are provided

81. When a choice is allowed between alternative texts, whether they are fixed or optional, the first consideration must be the best interests of those taking part. It may be a matter of using the easier texts or the one more relevant to the gathered assembly or, as pastoral advantage may suggest, of repeating or replacing a text that is assigned as proper to one celebration and optional to another

The issue may arise when it is feared that some text will create difficulties for a particular congregation or when the same text would have to be repeated within a few days, as on a Sunday and on a following weekday.

4 Weekday readings

82. The arrangement of weekday readings provides texts for every day of the week throughout the year. In most cases, therefore, these readings are to be used on their assigned days, unless a solemnity, feast, or memorial with proper readings occurs.[107]

The one using the Order of Readings for weekdays must check to see whether one reading or another from the same biblical book will have to be omitted because of some celebration occurring during the week. With the plan of readings for the entire week in mind, the priest in that case arranges to omit the less significant selections or suitably combines them with other readings, if they contribute to an integral view of a particular theme.

5 Celebrations of the saints

83. When they exist, proper readings are given for celebrations of the saints, that is, biblical passages about the saint or the event in the saint's life that the Mass is celebrating. Even in the case of a memorial these readings must take the place of the weekday readings for the same day. This Order of Readings makes explicit note of every case of proper readings on a memorial.

In some cases there are accommodated readings, those, namely, that bring out some particular aspect of a saint's spiritual life or apostolate. Use of such readings does not seem binding, except for compelling pastoral reasons. For the most part references are given to readings in the Commons in order to facilitate choice. But these are merely suggestions: in place of an accommodated reading or the particular reading proposed from a Common, any other reading from the Commons referred to may be selected.

The first concern of a priest celebrating with a congregation is the spiritual benefit of the faithful and he will be careful not to impose his personal preference on them. Above all he will make sure not to omit too often or needlessly the readings assigned for each day in

the weekday Lectionary: the Church's desire is to provide the faithful with a richer share at the table of God's word.[108]

There are also general readings, that is, those placed in the Commons either for some determined class of saints (martyrs, virgins, pastors, etc.) or for the saints in generaL Because in these cases several texts are listed for the same reading, it will be up to the priest to choose the one best suited to the congregation.

In all celebrations of saints the readings may be taken not only from the Commons to which the references are given in each case, but also from the Common of Holy Men and Women, whenever there is special reason for doing so.

84. For celebrations of the saints:

a. On solemnities and feasts the readings must be those that are given in the Proper or the Commons. For solemnities and feasts of the General Roman Calendar proper readings are always assigned.
b. On solemnities belonging to particular calendars, three readings are to be assigned, unless the conference of bishops has decreed that there are to be only two readings.[109] The first reading is from the Old Testament (but during the Easter season, from Acts or Apocalypse); the second, from an apostle; the third, from the gospels,
c. On feasts and memorials, which have only two readings, the first can be chosen from either the Old Testament or from an apostle; the second is from the gospels, Following the Church's traditional practice, however, the first reading during the Easter season is to be taken from an apostle, the second, as far as possible, from the Gospel of John.

6 Other parts of the Order of Readings

85. In the Order of Readings for ritual Masses the references given are to the texts already published for the individual rites. This obviously does not include the texts belonging to celebrations that must not be integrated with Mass.[110]

86. The Order of Readings for Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead provides many texts that can be of assistance in adapting such celebrations to the situation, circumstances, and concerns of the particular groups taking part.[111]

87. In ritual Masses, Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead, since many texts are given for the same reading, the choice of readings follows the criteria already indicated for the choice of readings from the Common of Saints.

88. On a day when some ritual Mass is not permitted and the norms in the individual rite allow the choice of one reading from those provided for ritual Masses, the general spiritual welfare of the participants must be the primary consideration.[112]

b. Responsorial psalm and acclamation before the gospel

89. Among the chants between the readings, the psalm after the first reading is very important. As a rule the psalm to be used is the one assigned to the reading. But in the case of readings for the Common of Saints, ritual Masses, Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead the choice is left up to the priest celebrating. He will base his choice on the principle of the pastoral benefit of those participating.

But to make it easier for the people to join in the response to the psalm, the Order of Readings lists certain other texts of psalms and responses that have been chosen accord-

ing to the various seasons or classes of saints. Whenever the psalm is sung, these texts may replace the text corresponding to the reading.[113]

90. The chant between the second reading and the gospel is either specified in each Mass and correlated with the gospel or else it is left as a choice to be made from those in the series belonging to a liturgical season or to one of the Commons.

91. During Lent one of the acclamations from those given in the text of the Order of Readings[114] may be used, depending on the occasion. This acclamation is made before and after the verse before the gospel.

Chapter V

Description of the Order of Readings

92. It seems useful to provide here a brief description of the Order of Readings, at least for the principal celebrations and the different seasons of the liturgical year. With these in mind, readings were selected on the basis of the rules already stated. This description is meant to assist priests to understand the structure of the Order of Readings so that their use of it will become more perceptive and the Order of Readings a source of good for Christ's faithful.

1. Advent

a. Sundays

93. Each gospel reading has a distinctive theme: the Lord's corning at the end of time (First Sunday of Advent), John the Baptist (Second and Third Sunday), and the events that prepared immediately for the Lord's birth (Fourth Sunday).

The Old Testament readings are prophecies about the Messiah and the Messianic age, especially from Isaiah. The readings from an apostle serve as exhortations and as proclamations, in keeping with the different themes of Advent.

b. Weekdays

94. There are two series of readings: one to be used from the beginning of Advent until 16 December: the other from 17 to 24 December.

In the first part of Advent there are readings from Isaiah, distributed in accord with the sequence of the book itself and including salient texts that are also read on the Sundays. For the choice of the weekday gospel the first reading has been taken into consideration.

On Thursday of the second week the readings of the gospel about John the Baptist begin. The first reading is either a continuation of Isaiah or a text chosen in view of the gospel

In the last week before Christmas the events that immediately prepared for the Lord's birth are presented from Matthew (Chapter 1) and Luke (Chapter 1) The texts in the first reading, chosen in view of the gospel reading, are from different Old Testament books and include important Messianic prophecies.

2. Christmas Season

a. Solemnities, Feasts, and Sundays

95. For the vigil and the three Masses of Christmas both the prophetic readings and the others have been chosen from the Roman tradition.

The gospel on the Sunday within the octave of Christmas, feast of the Holy Family, is about Jesus' childhood and the other readings are about the virtues of family life. On the octave of Christmas, solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, the readings are about the Virgin Mother of God and the giving of the holy Name of Jesus. On the second Sunday after Christmas, the readings are about the mystery of the incarnation. On Epiphany, the Old Testament reading and the gospel continue the Roman tradition; the text for the reading from the apostolic letters is about the calling of all peoples to salvation. On the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, the texts chosen are about this mystery.

b Weekdays

96. From 29 December on, there is a continuous reading of the whole of 1 John, which actually begins earlier, on 27 December, feast of St. John the Evangelist, and on 28 December, feast of the Holy Innocents. The gospels relate manifestations of the Lord: events of Jesus' childhood from Luke (29-30 December); passages from John 1 (31 December - 5 January); other manifestations from the four gospels (7-18 January).

3. Lent

a Sundays

97. The gospel readings are arranged as follows:

The first and second Sundays retain the accounts of the Lord's temptations and transfiguration, with readings, however, from all three Synoptics.

On the next three Sundays, the gospels about the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus have been restored in Year A. Because these gospels are of major importance in regard to Christian initiation, they may also be read in Year B and Year C, especially in places where there are catechumens.

Other texts, however, are provided for Year B and Year C: for Year B, a text from John about Christ's coming glorification through his cross and resurrection and for Year C, a text from Luke about conversion.

On Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) the texts for the procession are selections from the Synoptic Gospels concerning the Lord's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. For the Mass the reading is the account of the Lord's passion.

The Old Testament readings are about the history of salvation, which is one of the themes proper to the catechesis of Lent. The series of texts for each Year presents the main elements of salvation history from its beginning until the promise of the New Covenant.

The readings from the letters of the apostles have been selected to fit the gospel and the Old Testament readings and, to the extent possible, to provide a connection between them.

b. Weekdays

98. The readings from the gospels and the Old Testament were selected because they are related to each other. They treat various themes of the Lenten catechesis that are suited to the spiritual significance of this season. Beginning with Monday of the fourth week of Lent, there is a semi continuous reading of the Gospel of John, made up of texts that correspond more closely to the themes proper to Lent.

Because the readings about the Samaritan woman, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus are now assigned to Sundays, but only for Year A (in Year Band Year C they are optional), provision has been made for their use on weekdays. Thus at the beginning of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Weeks of Lent optional Masses with these texts for the gospel have been inserted and may be used in place of the readings of the day on any weekday of the respective week.

In the first half of Holy Week the readings are about the mystery of Christ's passion. For the chrism Mass the readings bring out both Christ's messianic mission and its continuation in the Church by means of the sacraments.

4. The Easter Triduum and the Easter Season

a The Easter Triduum

99. On Holy Thursday at the evening Mass the remembrance of the supper preceding Christ's departure casts its own special light because of the Lord's example in washing the feet of his disciples and Paul's account of the institution of the Christian Passover in the eucharist.

On Good Friday the liturgical service has as its centre John's narrative of the passion of him who was portrayed in Isaiah as the Servant of Yahweh and who became the one High Priest by offering himself to the Father.

On the holy night of the Easter Vigil there are seven Old Testament readings, recalling the wonderful works of God in the history of salvation. There are two New Testament readings, the announcement of the resurrection according to one of the Synoptic Gospels and a reading from St. Paul on Christian baptism as the sacrament of Christ's resurrection.

The gospel reading for the Mass on Easter day is from John on the finding of the empty tomb. There is also, however, the option to use the gospel texts from the Easter Vigil or, when there is an evening Mass on Easter Sunday, to use the account in Luke of the Lord's appearance to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The first reading is from Acts, which throughout the Easter season replaces the Old Testament reading. The reading from St. Paul concerns the living out of the paschal mystery in the Church.

b. Sundays

100. The gospel readings for the first three Sundays recount the appearances of the risen Christ. The readings about the Good Shepherd are assigned to the Fourth Sunday. On the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sundays, there are excerpts from the Lord's discourse and prayer at the last supper.

The first reading is from Acts, in a three-year cycle of parallel and progressive selections: material is presented on the life ofthe primitive Church, its witness, and its growth.

For the reading from the apostles, 1 Peter is in Year A, 1 John in Year B, Revelation in Year C. These are the texts that seem to fit in especially well with the spirit of joyous faith and sure hope proper to this season.

c Weekdays

101. As on the Sundays, the first reading is a semicontinuous reading from Acts. The gospel readings during the Easter octave are accounts of the Lord's appearances. After that there is a semi continuous reading of the Gospel of John, but with texts that have a paschal character in order to complete the reading from John during Lent. This paschal reading is made up in large part of the Lord's discourse and prayer at the last supper.

d Solemnities of the Ascension and Pentecost

102. For the first reading the solemnity of the Ascension retains the account of the Ascension according to Acts. This text is complemented by the second reading from the apostolic reflections on Christ in exaltation at the right hand of the Father. For the gospel reading, each of the three Years has its own text in accord with the differences in the Synoptic Gospels.

In the evening Mass celebrated on the vigil of Pentecost four Old Testament texts are provided; anyone of them may be used, in order to bring out the many aspects of Pentecost. The reading from the apostles shows the actual working of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The gospel reading recalls the promise of the Spirit made by Christ before his own glorification.

For the Mass on Pentecost itself; in accord with received usage, the account in Acts of the great occurrence on Pentecost is taken as the first reading. The texts from Paul bring out the effect of the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. The gospel reading is a remembrance of Jesus bestowing his Spirit on the disciples on Easter evening; other optional texts describe the action of the Spirit on the disciples and on the Church.

5. Ordinary Time

a. Arrangement and choice of texts

103. Ordinary Time begins on the Monday after the Sunday following 6 January; it lasts until the Tuesday before Lent inclusive. It begins again on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday and finishes before evening prayer I of the first Sunday of Advent. The Order of Readings provides readings for thirty-four Sundays and the weeks following them. In some years, however, there are only thirty-three weeks of Ordinary Time. Further, some Sundays either belong to another season (the Sunday on which the feast of the Baptism of the Lord falls and Pentecost) or else are impeded by a solemnity that coincides with Sunday (for example, Holy Trinity or Christ the King).

104. For the correct arrangement in the use of the readings for Ordinary Time, the following are to be respected:

   1. The Sunday on which the feast of the Baptism of the Lord falls replaces the first Sunday in Ordinary Time. Therefore the readings of the First Week of Ordinary Time begin on the Monday after the Sunday following 6 January. When the feast of the Baptism of the Lord is celebrated on Monday because Epiphany has been celebrated on the Sunday, the readings of the First Week begin on Tuesday.

2. The Sunday following the feast of the Baptism of the Lord is the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time. The remaining Sundays are numbered consecutively up to the Sunday preceding the beginning of Lent. The readings for the week in which Ash Wednesday falls are suspended after the Tuesday readings.
3. For the resumption of the readings of Ordinary Time after Pentecost Sunday: When there are thirty-four Sundays in Ordinary Time, the week to be used is the one that immediately follows the last week used before Lent.[115]

When there are thirty-three Sundays in Ordinary Time, the first week that would have been used after Pentecost is omitted, in order to reserve for the end of the year the eschatological texts that are assigned to the last two weeks.[116]

b Sunday readings

1 *Gospel readings*

105. On the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time the gospel continues to centre on the manifestation of the Lord, which Epiphany celebrates through the traditional passage about the wedding feast at Cana and two other passages from John.

Beginning with the Third Sunday, there is a semicontinuous reading of the Synoptic Gospels. This reading is arranged in such a way that as the Lord's life and preaching unfold the teaching proper to each of these Gospels is presented.

This distribution also provides a certain coordination between the meaning of each Gospel and the progress of the liturgical year. Thus after Epiphany the readings are on the beginning of the Lord's preaching and they fit in well with Christ's baptism and the first events in which he manifests himself. The liturgical year leads quite naturally to a termination in the eschatological theme proper to the last Sundays, since the chapters of the Synoptics that precede the account of the passion treat this eschatological theme rather extensively.

After the Sixteenth Sunday in Year B, five readings are incorporated from John 6 (the discourse on the bread of life). This is the proper place for these readings because the multiplication of the loaves from John takes the place of the same account in Mark. In the semicontinuous reading of Luke for Year C, the introduction of this Gospel has been prefixed to the first text (that is, on the Third Sunday). This passage expresses the author's intention very beautifully and there seemed to be no better place for it.

2 *Old Testament readings*

106. These readings have been chosen to correspond to the gospel passages in order to avoid an excessive diversity between the readings of different Masses and above all to bring out the unity between the Old and New Testament. The relationship between the readings of the same Mass is shown by a precise choice of the headings prefixed to the individual readings.

To the degree possible, the readings were chosen in such a way that they would be short and easy to grasp. But care has been taken to ensure that many Old Testament texts of major significance would be read on Sundays. Such readings are distributed not according to a logical order but on the basis of what the gospel reading requires. Still, the treasury of the word of God will be opened up in such a way that nearly all the principal pages of the Old Testament will become familiar to those taking part in the Mass on Sundays.

3 *Readings from the apostles*

107. There is a semicontinuous reading of the Letters of Paul and James. (The Letters of Peter and John are read during the Easter and Christmas seasons.) Because it is quite long and deals with such diverse issues, the First Letter to the Corinthians has been spread over the three years of the cycle at the beginning of Ordinary Time. It also was thought best to divide Hebrews into two parts; the first part is read in Year B and the second in Year C.

Only readings that are short and readily grasped by the people have been chosen.

Table IV at the end of this Introduction[117] indicates the distribution of letters of the apostles over the three-year cycle of the Sundays of Ordinary Time.

c Readings for Solemnities of the Lord during Ordinary Time

108. On the solemnities of Holy Trinity, Corpus Christi, and the Sacred Heart, the texts chosen correspond to the principal themes of these celebrations.

The readings of the Thirty-Fourth and last Sunday of Ordinary Time celebrate Christ the King. He was prefigured by David and heralded as king amid the humiliations of his passion and cross; he reigns in the Church and will come again at the end of time.

d Weekday readings

109. 1) The gospels are so arranged that Mark is read first (First to Ninth Week), then Matthew (Tenth to Twenty-first Week), then Luke (Twenty-second to Thirtyfourth Week). Mark 1-12 are read in their entirety, with the exception only of the two passages of Mark 6 that are read on weekdays in other seasons. From Matthew and Luke the readings comprise all the matters not contained in Mark. From all three Synoptics or from two of them, as the case may be, all those passages are read that either are distinctively presented in each Gospel or are needed for a proper understanding of its progression. Jesus' eschatological discourse as contained in its entirety in Luke is read at the end of the liturgical year.

110. 2) The first reading is taken in periods of weeks first from the Old then from the New Testament; the number of weeks depends on the length of the biblical books read.

Rather large sections are read from the New Testament books in order to give the substance, as it were, of each of the letters of the apostles.

From the Old Testament there is room only for select passages that, as far as possible, bring out the character of the individual books. The historical texts have been chosen in such a way as to provide an overall view of the history of salvation before the Lord's incarnation. But lengthy narratives could hardly be presented; sometimes verses have been selected that make for a reading of moderate length. In addition, the religious significance of the historical events is sometimes brought out by means of certain texts from the wisdom books that are placed as prologues or conclusions to a series of historical readings.

Nearly all the Old Testament books have found a place in the Order of Readings for weekdays in the Proper of Seasons.. The only omissions are the shortest of the prophetic books (Obadiah and Zephaniah) and the poetic book (Song of Solomon). Of those narratives written to edify and requiring a rather long reading to be understood, Tobit and Ruth are included, but Esther and Judith are omitted. (Texts from these two books are assigned to Sundays and weekdays at other times of the year.)

Tables are given to list the way the books of the Old and the New Testament are distributed over the weekdays in Ordinary Time in the course of two years.[118] At the end of the

liturgical year the readings are from Daniel and Apocalypse, the books that correspond to the eschatological character of this period.

Chapter VI

Adaptations, Translations, and Format of the Order of Readings

1. Adaptations and Translations

111. In the liturgical assembly the word of God must always be read either from the Latin texts prepared by the Holy See or from vernacular translations approved by the conferences of bishops for liturgical use, according to existing norms.[119]

112. The Lectionary for Mass must be translated integrally in all its parts, including the Introduction. If the conference of bishops has judged it necessary and useful to add certain adaptations, these are to be incorporated after their confirmation by the Holy See.[120]

113. The size of the Lectionary will necessitate editions in more than one volume; no particular division of the volumes is prescribed. But each volume is to contain the explanatory texts on the structure and purpose of the section it contains.

The ancient custom is recommended of having separate books, one for the gospels and the other for the readings for the Old and the New Testament.

It may also be useful to publish separately a Sunday lectionary, which could also contain selected excerpts from the sanctoral cycle, and a weekday lectionary. A practical basis for dividing the Sunday lectionary is the three-year cycle, so that all the readings for each year are presented in sequence.

But there is freedom to adopt other arrangements that may be devised and seem to have pastoral advantages.

114. The texts for the chants are always to be adjoined to the readings, but separate books containing the chants alone are permitted. It is recommended that the texts be printed with divisions into stanzas.

115. Whenever a text consists of different parts, the typography must make this structure of the text clear. It is likewise recommended that even non-poetic texts be printed with division into sense lines to assist the proclamation of the readings.

116. Where there are long and short forms of a text, they are to be printed separately so that each can be read with ease. But if such a separation does not seem feasible, a way is to be found to ensure that each text can be proclaimed without mistakes.

117. In vernacular editions the texts are not to be printed without the headings prefixed. If it seems advisable, an introductory note on the general meaning of the passage may be added to the heading. This note is to carry some distinctive symbol or is to be set in different type to show clearly that it is an optional text.[121]

1l8. It would be useful for every volume to have an index of the passages of the Bible, modelled on the biblical index of the present volume.[122] This will provide ready access to texts of the lectionaries for Mass that may be needed or helpful for specific occasions.

2. Format Of Individual Readings

For each reading the present volume carries the textual reference, the heading, and the incipit.

a Text references

119. The text reference (that is, chapter and verse) is always given according to the Neo-Vulgate edition, except for the psalms.[123] But a second reference according to the original text (Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek) has been added wherever there is a discrepancy. Depending on the decrees of the competent authorities for the indio vidual languages, vernacular versions may retain the enumeration corresponding to the version of the Bible approved for liturgical use by the same authorities. Exact references to chapter and verses, however, must always appear and may be given in the text or in the margin.

120. These references provide liturgical books with the source of the 'announcement' (inscriptio) of the text that must be read in the celebration, but which is not printed in this volume. This 'announcement' of the text will observe the following norms, but they may be altered by decree of the competent authorities on the basis of what is customary and useful for different places and languages.

121. 1) The formula to be used is always: 'A reading from the Book of…' 'A reading from the Letter of…' or 'A reading from the Gospel of…' and not: 'The beginning of…' (unless this seems advisable in particular instances) or: 'Continuation of…

122. 2) The traditionally accepted titles for books are to be retained, with the following exceptions:

   a Where there are two books with the same name, the title is to be: The First Book, The Second Book (e.g., of Kings, of Maccabees) or The First Letter, The Second Letter.

   b The title more common in current usage is to be accepted for the following books:

   I and II Samuel instead of I and II Kings;

   I and II Kings instead of III and IV Kings;

   I and II Chronicles instead of I and II Paralipomenon;

   Books of Ezra and Nehemiah instead of I and II Ezra.

   c. The distinguishing titles for the wisdom books are: Book of Job, Book of Proverbs, Book of Ecclesiastes or Qoheleth, Song of Songs, Book of Wisdom, Book of Ecclesiasticus or Sirach.

   d. For all the books that are included among the prophets in the Neo-Vulgate, the formula is to be: 'A reading from the Book of Isaiah, or of Jeremiah or of Baruch' and: 'A reading from the Prophecy of Ezekiel, of Daniel, of Hosea, of Malachi,' even in the case of books not universally regarded as in fact prophetic.

   e The title is to be Book of Lamentations and Letter to the Hebrews, with no mention of Jeremiah and Paul.

b Heading

123. There is a heading prefixed to each text, chosen carefully (usually from the words of the text itself) in order to point out the main theme of the reading and, when necessary, to make the connection between the readings of the same Mass clear.

c Incipit

124. In this Order of Readings the first element of the incipit is the customary introductory phrase, 'At that time,' 'In those days,' 'Brothers and Sisters,' 'Dearly Beloved,' or 'Thus says the Lord.' These words are not given when the text itself provides sufficient indication of the time or the persons involved or where such phrases would not fit in with the very nature of the text. For the individual languages, such phrases may be changed or dropped by decree of the competent authorities,

After the first words of the incipit the Order of Readings gives the proper beginning of the reading, with some words deleted or supplied for intelligibility, inasmuch as the text is separated from its context. When the text for a reading is made up of nonconsecutive verses and this has required changes in wording, these are appropriately indicated.

d Final acclamation

125. In order to facilitate the congregation's acclamation, the words for the reader This is the word of the Lord, or similar words suited to local custom, are to be printed at the end of the reading for use by the reader.

ENDNOTES

1 See especially Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, nos 7. 24, :33, 35, 48. 51, 52, 56; Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, nos. 1,21,25,26; Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, no. 6; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests. no. 18

2 Among the spoken or written papal statements. see especially: Paul VI, motu proprio *Ministeria quaedam*, 15 Aug. 1972, no V: AAS 64 119721532; apostolic exhortation *Marialis cultus*, 2 Feb. 1974, no 12: AAS 6611974) 125-126; apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. 8 Dec 1975, nos. 28.43,47: AAS 68 119761 24-25, 3:3-34, 36-37. John Paul II, apostolic constitution *Scripturarum thesaurus*, 25 April 1979: in *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum* (Vatican Polyglot Press, 1979) V–VIII; apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 Oct 1979, nos 23, 27, and 48: AAS 71 (1979) 1296–1297, 1298–1299 and 1316; epistle *Dominicae Cenae*. 24 Feb 1980. no. 10: AAS 72 (1980) 134–137

3 See, for example. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 25 May 1967. no. 10: AAS 59 (1967) 547–548. Congregation for Divine Worship, instruction *Liturgicae instaurationes,* 5 Sept. 1970. no. 2: AAS 62 (1970) 695-696 Congregation for the Clergy. *Directorium catechisticum generale*. 11 April 1971, nos. 10-12 and 25: AAS 64 (1972) 106-107 and 114. Congregation for Divine Worship, General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 9, 11, 24., 33, 60, 62, 316, 320. Congregation for Catholic Education, instruction on liturgical formation in seminaries *In ecclesiasticam*, 3 .June 1979, nos. 11. 52, and Appendix. no. 15. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, instruction *Inaestimabile Donum,* 3 April 1980. nos. 1. 2. 3: AAS 72 119801 333-334

4 See *The Roman Missal* revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, published by authority of Pope Paul VI [hereafter. *The Roman Missal*], *Lectionary for Mass* (1969; Eng. tr. 1969). Introduction, nos. 1-7; decree of promulgation: AAS 61 (1969) 548-549.

5 See Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 35, 56. Paul VI, apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, 8 Dec 1975. nos 28, 47: AAS 68 (1976) 24-25, 36-37. John Paul II, epistle *Dominicae Cenae,* 24 Feb. 1980, nos. 10, 11, 12; AAS 72 (1980) 134–146

6 For example, the terms, *word of God, sacred Scripture, Old and New Testament, reading(s) of the word of God, reading(s) from sacred Scripture, celebration(s} of the word of God,* etc.

7 Thus the same text may be read or used for diverse reasons on diverse occasions and celebrations of the liturgical year; this has to be remembered in the homily, pastoral exegesis, and catechesis. The indexes of this volume will show, for example, that Romans 6 or 8 is used in various liturgical seasons and celebrations of the sacraments and sacramentals.

8 See Luke 4:16-21; 24:25-35 and 44-49.

9 In the celebration of Mass, for example, there is *proclamation*, *reading*, etc. (see General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 21, 23, 95, 131, 146, 234, 235) There are also other celebrations of the word of God in the Roman Pontifical, Ritual, and Liturgy of the Hours, as revised by decree of Vatican Council II.

10 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 7, 33. Mark 16:19–20; Matthew 28:20. St. Augustine, *Sermo* 85, 1: 'The Gospel is the mouth of Christ. He is seated at the right hand of the Father, yet continues to speak on earth' (PL 38:520; see also *In Io. Ev. tract* 30, 1: PL 35, 1632; CCL 36, 289). *Pontificale Romano-Germanicum*: 'As the gospel is read Christ speaks with his own mouth to the people…; the gospel resounds in the church as though Christ himself were speaking to them' (See C. Vogel and R Elze, eds., *Le Pontifical Romano-germanique du dixième siècle. Texte I*, Vatican City, 1963/XCIV, 18, 334); *idem*: 'At the moment Christ approaches, that is at the gospel of the Mass, we put aside our staffs, because we have no need of human assistance' (ibid XCIV, 23, 335)

11 See Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Liturgy, no 7.

12 See Hebrews 4: 12

13 See St. Augustine, *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum liber* 2, 73: PL 34, 623; CCL 33, 106. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 16.

14 See St. Jerome: 'If, as St. Paul says (1 Corinthians 1;24), Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, anyone who does not know the Scriptures does not know the power of God or his wisdom.

For not to know the Scriptures is not to know Christ' (*Commentarii in Isaiam prophetam. Prologus*: PL 24, 17 A; CCL 73, 1). Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no 25.

15 See 2 Corinthians 1:20-22.

16 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 10.

17 See 2 Thessalonians 3:1.

18 See *The Roman Missal*, opening prayers A, B, and C in the Mass for the Universal Church. St. Cyprian, *De oratione dominica* 23:PL 4, 553; CSEL 3/2, 285; CCL 3A, 105 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 71, 20, 33: PL 38, 463ff.

19 See *The Roman Missal*. opening prayer for the Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time.

20 See Vatican Council II. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. no 8.

21 See John 14:15-17, 25-26; 15:26–16:15

22 See Vatican Council II. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests. no. 4

23 See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 51; Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests. no. 18; also Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. no. 21; Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, no 6. See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no 8.

24 Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 56.

25 General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 33

26 See Congregation for Divine Worship, instruction *Liturgicae instaurationes*, 5 Sept 1970. no. 2: AAS 62 (1970) 695–696. John Paul II, epistle *Dominicae Cenae*, 24 Feb. 1980, no. 10: AAS 72 (1980) 134-137. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, instruction *Inaestimabile Donum*, 3 April 1980, no 1: AAS 72 (1980) 333.

27 Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 33

28 See no. 111 of this Introduction.

29 See *Missale Romanum* ex Decreta Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum, *Ordo cantus Missae* (ed typ., 1972), *Praenotanda*, nos. 4, 6, 10.

30 See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 11.

31 See ibid, no. 272 and nos. 32–34 of this Introduction.

32 See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 39, 95.

33 See ibid., nos. 82–84.

34 See ibid., nos 94, 131.

35 See *The Roman Missal*, Order of Mass, 'Liturgy of the Word: The Gospel'.

36 General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 36.

37 Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Laudis canticum* in *The Liturgy of the Hours* [*The Divine Office*] revised by decree of the Second Vatican Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI (1971; Eng. tr. 1974). See also Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 24, 90, Congregation of Rites, instruction on music in the liturgy, *Musicam Sacram*, 5 March 1967, no. 39: AAS 59 (1967) 311. General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours, nos. 23 and 109. Congregation for Catholic Education, *Ratio fundamentalis* [Basic Plan for Priestly Formation], no. 53.

38 See nos. 89–90 of this Introduction.

39 See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 18 and 39.

40 See ibid., no. 272 and nos. 32ff, of this Introduction.

41 See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 39.

42 See also ibid., nos. 37 -39. *Missale Romanum* ex Decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II instauraturm, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum, *Ordo cantus Missae*, Praenotanda, nos. 7-9; *Graduale Romanum* (1974), *Praenotanda*, no. 7; *Graduale simplex* (2nd ed. typ., 1975), *Praenotanda*, no. 16.

[43] See Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 52. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 Sept. 1964, no. 54: AAS 56 (1964) 890.

[44] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no 42.

[45] See Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 35, 2.

[46] See ibid. nos. 6 and 47.

[47] See Paul VI. encyclical *Mysterium Fidei,* 3 Sept 1965: AAS 57 (1965) 753. Vatican Council II. Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church. no 9. Paul VI. apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*. 8 Dec 1975. no 43: AAS 69 (1976) 33-34.

[48] See Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Liturgy. no 35, 2. General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no. 41.

[49] Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Liturgy. no 10.

[50] See John Paul II. apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 Oct 1979. no. 48: AAS 71 (1979) 1316.

[51] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no 165.

[52] See ibid. no. 42 See also Congregation of Rites instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, 25 May 1967, no 28: AAS 59 (1967) 556-557.

[53] See Congregation for Divine Worship instruction *Actio pastoralis*, 15 May 1969. no. 6g; AAS 61 (1969) 809: *Directory for Masses with Children* (1973: Eng tr. 1973), no. 48.

[54] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. nos 42. 338. *The Roman Ritual* as revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI. Rite of Marriage (1969: Eng tr. 1969), nos. 22, 42, 57; *Rite of Funerals* (1969; Eng tr. 1970). nos. 41. 64.

[55] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no 97.

[56] See ibid no. 139.

[57] See ibid. no. 43.

[58] See ibid. no 43.

[59] See ibid. no 45.

[60] See ibid. no 99.

[61] See ibid. no 47.

[62] See note 23 of this Introduction.

[63] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no 272.

[64] See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 122.

[65] See *The Roman Pontifical* revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI, *Ordination of Deacons, Priests, and Bishops* (1968; Eng. tr. 1976); *Ordination of Deacons*, no. 24; *Ordination of Deacons and Priests*, no. 21; *Ordination of a Deacon*, no. 24; *Ordination of a Bishop*, no. 25; *Ordination of Bishops*, no. 25.

[66] See nos. 78–91 of this Introduction.

[67] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 318-320; 324-325.

[68] See ibid., no. 313.

[69] See ibid., no. 42. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, instruction *Inaestimabile Donum*, 3 April 1980, no. 3: AAS 72 (1980) 334.

[70] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 11.

[71] See ibid, no. 68.

[72] See ibid, nos. 33, 47.

[73] Vatican Council II, Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, no. 4.

[74] Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 33.

[75] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no 9.

[76] Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Liturgy. no 7.

[77] See ibid, no. 9.

[78] See Romans 1:16.

[79] See Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no 21.

[80] See ibid.

[81] See John 14:15-26; 15-26–16:4, 5–15.

[82] See Vatican Council II, Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, nos. 6 and 15; also Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 26.

[83] See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 24 See also Congregation for the Clergy, *Directorium catechisticum generale*, 11 April 1971. no. 25: AAS 64 (1972) 114.

[84] See Vatican Council II. Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 56. See also Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, instruction *Inaestimabile Donum*, 3 April 1980, no. 1: AAS 72 (1980) 333-334.

[85] See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy. nos. 24 and 35.

[86] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 34.

[87] See ibid. no. 96.

[88] See ibid. nos. 47. 61. 132; Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, instruction *Inaestimabile Donum*, 3 April 1980. no. 3: AAS 72 (1980) 334.

[89] General Instruction of the Roman Missal. no. 66.

[90] See Paul VI, motu proprio *Ministeria quaedam*. 15 Aug 1972. no. V: AAS 64 (1972) 532.

[91] See Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship. instruction *Inaestimabile Donum*. 3 April 1980, nos. 2 and 18: AAS 72 (1980) 334 and 338. See also Congregation for Divine Worship, Directory for Masses with Children (1973; Eng tr. 1973), nos. 22, 24, 27.

[92] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. Nos. 47, 66, 151. See also Consilium, *De oratione communi seu fidelium* (Vatican City, 1966), no. 8.

[93] General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 66.

[94] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 37a and 67.

[95] See ibid. no 68.

[96] See for example Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Missale Romanum*: 'All this has been planned to develop among the faithful a greater hunger for the word of God. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, this hunger will seem, so to speak, to impel the people of the New Covenant toward the perfect unity of the Church. We are fully confident on this account that both priests and faithful will prepare their minds and hearts more devoutly for the Lord's Supper and that, meditating on the Scriptures, they will be nourished more each day by the words of the Lord. In accord with the hopes of Vatican Council II, all will thus regard sacred Scripture as the abiding source of spiritual life, the foundation for Christian instruction, and the core of all theological study' (in *The Roman Missal*).

[97] See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 35 and 51.

[98] See Paul VI, apostolic constitution *Missale Romanum*: 'This is meant to provide a fuller exposition of the continuing process of the mystery of salvation as shown in the words of divine revelation' (in *The Roman Missal*).

[99] See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, nos. 9, 33. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Inter Oecumenici*, 26 Sept. 1964, no. 7: AAS 56 (1964) 878. John Paul II. apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*, 16 Oct. 1979, no. 23: AAS 71 (1979) 1296-1297.

[100] See Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 35, 4. Congregation of Rites, instruction *Inter Oecumenici*. 26 Sept 1964, nos. 37-38: AAS 56 (19641 884.

[101] See Congregation for Divine Worship. instruction *Actio pastoralis*, 15 May 1969, no. 6: AAS 61 (1969) 809; *Directory for Masses with Children* (1973; Eng. tr. 1973), nos. 41-47. Paul VI, apostolic exhortation *Marialis cultus*, 2 Feb 1974, no 12: AAS 66 (1974) 125-126.

[102] Each of the years is designated by a letter, A, B, or C. The following is the procedure to determine which year is A, B, or C. The letter C designates a year whose number is divisible into three equal parts, as though the cycle had taken its beginning from the first year of the Christian era. Thus the year 1 would have been Year A: year 2, Year B; year 3, Year C, (as would years 6, 9, and 12), This, for example, year 1980 is Year C; 1981, Year A; 1982, Year B; and 1983, Year C again. And so forth. Obviously each cycle runs in accord with the plan of the liturgical year, that is, it begins with the First Week of Advent, which falls in the preceding year of the civil calendar.

The distinguishing characteristic for the years in each cycle is based in a sense on the principal note of the Synoptic Gospel used for the semicontinuous reading of Ordinary Time. Thus the first Year of the cycle is the Year for the reading of the Gospel of Matthew and is so named; the second and third Years are the Year of Mark and the Year of Luke.

[103] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal. nos. 36-40. *Missale Romanum* ex Decreto Sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum, *Ordo cantus Missae*, (Vatican Polyglot Press, 1972), *Praenotanda*, nos. 5-9.

[104] General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 313.

[105] See ibid., no. 318; Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, instruction *Inaestimabile Donum*, 3 April 1980, no. 1; AAS 72 (1980) 333-334.

[106] For example: in Lent. the continuity of the Old Testament. readings corresponds to the unfolding of the history of salvation; the Sundays in Ordinary Time provide the semicontinuous reading of one of the letters of the apostles. In these cases, it is right that the priest choose one or other of the readings in a systematic way over a series of Sundays so that he may set up a coherent plan for catechesis. It is not right to read indiscriminately on one day from the Old Testament, on another from the letter of an apostle, without any orderly plan for subsequent texts.

[107] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no 319.

[108] See ibid, no. 316c Vatican Council II, Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 51.

[109] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 318.

[110] See *The Roman Ritual* as revised by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by authority of Pope Paul VI, *Rite of Penance* (1974; Eng. tr. 1974), Introduction, no. 13. [See, however, Introduction to this edition, volume III.]

[111] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 320.

[112] See ibid., no. 313.

[113] See Volume I, Common Texts for Sung Responsorial Psalms.

[114] See Volume I. Gospel Acclamations for the Weekdays of Lent.

[115] So, for example, when there are six weeks before Lent, the seventh week begins on the Monday after Pentecost. The solemnity of the Holy Trinity replaces the Sunday of Ordinary Time.

[116] When there are, for example, five weeks before Lent, the Monday after Pentecost begins with the Seventh Week of Ordinary Time and the Sixth Week is dropped.

[117] See Volume I, Table IV.

[118] See Volume II, Tables I and II.

[119] See Consilium, instruction *De popularibus interpretationibus conficiendis*, 25 Jan. 1969: Notitiae 5 (1969) 3-12: *Declaratio circa interpretationes textuum liturgicorum ad interim paratas*: Notitiae 5 (1969) 69. Congregation for Divine Worship, *Declaratio de interpretatione textuum liturgicorum*: Notitiae 5 (1969) 333–334 (also *Responsiones ad dubia*: Notitiae 9 (1973) 153-154); *De unica interpretatione textuum liturgicorum*: Notitiae 6 (1970) 84-85. Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship, *Epistola ad Praesides Conferentiarum Episcoporum de linguis vulgaribus in S. Liturgiam inducendis*: Notitiae 12 (1976) 300-302.

[120] See Congregation for Divine Worship, instruction *Liturgicae instaurationes*, 5 Sept. 1970, no, 11: AAS 62 (1970) 702–703. General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 325.

[121] See General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 11, 29, 68a, 139.

[122] See Index of Readings at the end of each volume of this edition.

[123] The references for the psalms follow the order of the *Liber Psalmorum*, published by the Pontifical Commission for the Neo-Vulgate (Vatican Polyglot Press, 1969) [In this English edition, the reference is to the Grail version of the psalms: *The Psalms, a new translation*, Collins, 1963.]

Tables

Volume I

Table I	Order for Gospel Reading for Sundays in Ordinary Time Year A
Table II	Order for Gospel Reading for Sundays in Ordinary Time Year B
Table III	Order for Gospel Reading for Sundays in Ordinary Time Year C
Table IV	Arrangement of the Second Reading for the Sundays in Ordinary Time

Volume II

Table I	Order for the Readings for Weekdays in Ordinary Time: Year I
Table II	Order for the Readings for Weekdays in Ordinary Time: Year II

TABLE I
Order for Gospel Reading for Sundays in Ordinary Time

YEAR A: YEAR OF MATTHEW

In order to do justice to the intention of the Lectionary, the five great 'sermons' in Matthew's Gospel will of necessity be the focal points of preaching and instruction. The narrative sections, which are placed in between the sermons, are composed in such a way that there is a unity and coherence in the whole work.

Discourse and narrative stand side by side, so that the narrative chapters prepare the way for what follows in the discourses. Recognising the way in which the Lectionary has reflected the structure of Matthew's Gospel, will enable preachers and readers to see the context of the readings from one week to the next.

Unit I	**The figure of Jesus the Messiah**	**Sundays 1-2**
SUNDAY 1	The Baptism of Jesus	Mt 3:13-17
SUNDAY 2	The witness of John the Baptist	Jn 1:29.34
Unit II	**Christ's design for life in God's Kingdom**	**Sundays 3-9**
	Narrative:	
SUNDAY 3	The call of the first disciples	Mt 4:12-23
	Discourse:	
SUNDAY 4	The Sermon on the Mount (1)	Mt 5:1-12
SUNDAY 5	The Sermon on the Mount (2)	Mt 5:13-16
SUNDAY 6	The Sermon on the Mount (3)	Mt5:17-37
SUNDAY 7	The Sermon on the Mount (4)	Mt 5:38.48
SUNDAY 8	The Sermon on the Mount (5)	Mt 6:24-34
SUNDAY 9	The Sermon on the Mount (6)	Mt 7:21-27
Unit III	**The spread of God's Kingdom**	**Sundays 10-13**
	Narrative:	
SUNDAY 10	The call of Levi	Mt 9:9.13
	Discourse:	
SUNDAY 11	The mission sermon (1)	Mt 9:36-10:8
SUNDAY 12	The mission sermon (2)	Mt 10:26-33
SUNDAY 13	The mission sermon (3)	Mt 10:37 -42
Unit IV	**The mystery of God's Kingdom**	**Sundays 14-17**
	Narrative:	
SUNDAY 14	The revelation to the simple	Mt 11:25-30
	Discourse:	
SUNDAY 15	The parable sermon (1)	Mt 13:1-23
SUNDAY 16	The parable sermon (2)	Mt 13:24-43
SUNDAY 17	The parable sermon (3)	Mt 13:44-52

Unit V	**God's kingdom on earth - The Church of Christ**	**Sundays 18-24**
	Narrative,:	
SUNDAY 18	The feeding of five thousand	Mt 14:31-21
SUNDAY 19	Jesus walks on the waters	Mt 14:22.33
SUNDAY 20	The Canaanite woman	Mt 15:21-28
SUNDAY 21	Peter's confession: the primacy conferred	Mt 16:13-20
SUNDAY 22	The passion prophesied: discipleship	Mt 16:21-27
	Discourse:	
SUNDAY 23	The community sermon (1)	Mt 18:15-20
SUNDAY 24	The community sermon (2)	Mt 18:21-35
Unit VI	**Authority and invitation - the ministry ends**	**Sundays 25-33**
	Narrative:	
SUNDAY 25	The parable of the labourers	Mt 20:1-16
SUNDAY 26	The parable ofthe two sons	Mt 21:28-32
SUNDAY 27	The parable of the wicked vinedressers	Mt 21:33-43
SUNDAY 28	The parable of the marriage feast	Mt 22:1-14
SUNDAY 29	Paying tribute to Caesar	Mt 22:15-21
SUNDAY 30	The greatest commandment	Mt 22:34-40
SUNDAY 31	Hypocrisy and ambition	Mt 23:1-12
	Discourse:	
SUNDAY 32	The final sermon (1)	Mt 25:1.13
SUNDAY 33	The final sermon (2)	Mt 25:14-30
Unit VII	**God's Kingdom fulfilled**	**Sunday 34**
SUNDAY 34	Christ the King	Mt 25:31-46

Table II

Order for Gospel Reading for Sundays in Ordinary Time

Year B: Year of Mark

Mark's main interest is the person of Jesus himself. He follows Jesus through his public ministry in Galilee, outside Galilee and finally in Jerusalem itself immediately before the passion. The crisis is reached when the fundamental question is posed to the disciples: 'Who do you say I am?' Peter's confession of faith is, therefore, at the heart of Mark's Gospel. In the year of Mark the Lectionary observes faithfully the structure and message of the Gospel itself One important peculiarity is that the Lectionary includes a major insert from the Gospel of John (Sundays 17-21: John 6 - the sermon on the 'Bread of Life'). This fits well into this part of Mark's Gospel, which is concerned with Jesus' revelation of himself, and is known as 'the Bread section'.

Unit I	**The figure of Jesus the Messiah**	**Sundays 1-2**
SUNDAY 1	The baptism of Jesus	Mk 1:6b-ll
SUNDAY 2	The call of Andrew and his friend	Jn1:35-42
Unit II	**The Mystery progressively revealed**	**Sundays 3-23**
Stage I	*Jesus with the Jewish crowds*	*Sundays 3-9*
SUNDAY 3	The call ofthe first apostles	Mk 1:14-20
SUNDAY 4	A day in Capernaum (1)	Mk 1:21-28
SUNDAY 5	A day in Capernaum (1)	Mk 1:29-39
SUNDAY 6	The cure of a leper	Mk 1:40-45
SUNDAY 7	The cure of a paralytic	Mk 2:1-12
SUNDAY 8	The question of fasting	Mk 2:18.22
SUNDAY 9	Violation of the Sabbath	Mk 2:23-3:6
Stage II	*Jesus with his disciples*	*Sundays 10-14*
SUNDA Y 10	Serious criticism of Jesus	Mk 3:20-35
SUNDAY 11	The parables ofthe Kingdom	Mk 4:26-34
SUNDAY 12	The calming of the storm	Mk 4:35-41
SUNDAY 13	Jairus' daughter; the woman in the crowd	Mk 5:21-43
SUNDAY 14	Jesus rejected at Nazareth	Mk 6:1-6
Stage III	*Jesus manifests himself*	*Sundays 15-23*
SUNDAY 15	The mission of the twelve	Mk 6:7-13
SUNDAY 16	Compassion for the crowds	Mk 6:30.34
SUNDAY 17	The feeding offiye thousand	Jn 6:1-15
SUNDAY 18	The bread oflife (1)	J n 6:24-35
BUNDA Y 19	The bread oflife (2)	Jn 6:41-52
SUNDA Y 20	The eucharist	Jn 6:51-58
SUNDA Y 21	Incredulity and faith	Jn 6:61-70
SUNDAY 22	Jewish customs	Mk 7:1-8.14-15,21
SUNDAY 23	The cure of a deaf-mute	Mk 7:31-37

Unit III	**The Mystery of the Son of Man**	**Sundays 24-34**
Stage I	*The 'Way' of the Son of Man*	*Sundays 24 -30*
SUNDAY 24	Peter's confession of faith	Mk 8:27-35
SUNDAY 25	Passion and resurrection prophesied	Mk 9:29.36
SUNDAY 26	Instructions for disciples	Mk 9:37.42. 44. 46-47
SUNDAY 27	Marriage and divorce	Mk 10:2.16
SUNDAY 28	The problem of wealth	Mk 10:17-30
SUNDAY 29	The sons of Zebedee	Mk 10:35.46
SUNDAY 30	The cure of Bartimaeus	Mk 10:46-52
Stage II	*Final revelation in Jerusalem*	*Sundays 31-33*
SUNDAY 31	The first commandment	Mk 12:28b-34
SUNDAY 32	The widow's mite	Mk 12:38-44
SUNDAY 33	The last things	Mk 13:24-32
Stage III	*The fulfilment of the mystery*	*Sunday 34*
SUNDAY 34	The solemnity of Christ the King	Jn 18:33b.37

Table III

Order for Gospel Reading for Sundays in Ordinary Time

Year C: Year of Luke

Luke's Gospel represets Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem - a journey which is completed in the Acts of the Apostles by the journey of the Church from Jerusalem 'to the ends of the earth'. The Lectionary in the year of Luke represents faithfully his 'Travel Narrative' (chapters 9-19) - Jesus' journey to death, to resurrection and his return to the Father (see Sundays 13-31). Luke's vision of the journey is not geographical or chronologicaL Rather it is seen as a journey for the whole Church and for the individual christian, a journey towards suffering and glory. Each Gospel passage should mean a great deal more to preacher and reader when it is seen in the context of the whole programme of readings for Year C.

Unit I	**The figure of Jesus the Messiah**	**Sundays 1-2**
SUNDAY 1	The baptism of Jesus	Lk 3:15-16. 21-22
SUNDAY 2	The marriage feast at Cana	Jn 2:1.12
Unit II	**Luke's programme for Jesus' ministry**	**Sundays 3-4**
SUNDAY 3	Prologue. The visit to Nazareth (1)	Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21
SUNDAY 4	The visit to Nazareth (2)	Lk 4:21-30
Unit III	**The Galilean Ministry**	**Sundays 5-12**
SUNDAY 5	*The call of the first apostles	Lk 5:1-11
SUNDAY 6	The sermon on the plain (1)	Lk 6:17. 20.26
SUNDAY 7	The sermon on the plain (2)	Lk 6:27-38
SUNDAY 8	The sermon on the plain (3)	Lk 6:39.45
SUNDAY 9	The cure of the centurion's servant	Lk 7:1-10
SUNDAY 10	*The Widow ofNaim	Lk 7:11.17
SUNDAY 11	*Jesus' feet anointed: the sinful woman	Lk 7:36-8:3
SUNDAY 12	Peter's confession offaith	Lk 9:18-24
Unit IV	**The first part of the 'Travel Narrative': The qualities Jesus demands of those who follow him**	**Sundays 13-23**
SUNDAY 13	*The journey to Jerusalem begins	Lk 9:51-62
SUNDAY 14	*The mission of the seventy.two	Lk 10:1-12.17-20
SUNDAY 15	*The Good Samaritan	Lk 10:25-37
SUNDAY 16	*Martha and Mary	Lk 10:38-42
SUNDAY 17	*The importunate friend	Lk 11:1-13
SUNDAY 18	*The parable of the rich fool	Lk 12:13-21
SUNDAY 19	The need for vigilance	Lk 12:32-48
SUNDAY 20	'Not peace but division'	Lk 12:49-53
SUNDAY 21	Few will be saved	Lk 13:22-30
SUNDAY 22	True humility	Lk 14:1. 7-14
SUNDAY 23	The cost of discipleship	Lk 14:25-33

Unit V	**The 'Gospel within the Gospel': the message of pardon and reconciliation – the parables of God's mercy**	**Sunday 24**
SUNDAY 24	*The lost coin, the lost sheep, and the prodigal son	Lk 15:1-32
Unit VI	**The second part of the 'Travel Narrative': the obstacles facing those who follow Jesus**	**Sundays 25-31**
SUNDAY 25	*The unjust steward	Lk 16:1-13
SUNDAY 26	*The rich man and Lazarus	Lk 16:19-31
SUNDAY 27	* A lesson on faith and dedication	Lk 17:5-10
SUNDAY 28	*The ten lepers	Lk 17:11-19
SUNDAY 29	*The unjust judge	Lk 18:1-8
SUNDAY 30	*The Pharisee and the tax collector	Lk 18:9-14
SUNDAY 31	*Zacchaeus	Lk 19:1-10
Unit VII	**The ministry in Jerusalem**	**Sundays 32-33**
SUNDAY 32	The resurrection debated	Lk 20:27-38
SUNDAY 33	The signs announcing the end	Lk 21:5-19
Unit VIII	**Christ the King: reconciliation**	**Sunday 34**
SUNDAY 34	*The repentant thief	Lk 23:35-43

Note: Passages marked with an asterisk are found only in the Gospel of Luke,

Table IV

Arrangement of the Second Reading for the Sundays in Ordinary Time

Sunday	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
2	1 Corinthians 1–4	1 Corinthians 6–11	1 Corinthians 12–15
3			
4			
5			
6			
7	2 Corinthians		
8			
9	Romans		Galatians
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15		Ephesians	Colossians
16			
17			
18			
19			Hebrews 11–12
20			
21			
22		James	
23			Philemon
24			1 Timothy
25	Philippians		
26			
27		Hebrews 2–10	2 Timothy
28			
29	1 Thessalonians		
30			
31			2 Thessalonians
32			
33			

TABLE I

Order for the Readings for the Weekdays in Ordinary Time: Year I

Week	First Reading	Gospel Reading	
1	Hebrews	Mark	1:14-2:17
2			2:18-3:19
3			3:22-4:34
4			5:1-6:30
5	Genesis 1-11		6:53-8:10
6			8:11-9:13
7	Ecclesiasticus		9:14-10:16
8			10:17-11:33
9	Tobit		12:1-12:44
10	2 Corinthians	Matthew	5:1-37
11			5:38-6:34
12	Genesis 12-50		7:1-8:17
13			8: 1&:-9:17
14			9:18-10:33
15	Exodus		10:34-12:21
16			12:38-13:30
17	Exodus; Leviticus		13:31-14:12
18	Numbers; Deuteronomy		14:13-17:20
19	Deuteronomy; Joshua		17:22-19:15
20	Judges; Ruth		19:16-23:12
21	1 Thessalonians		23:13-25:30
22	1 Thessalonians; Colossians	Luke	4:16-6:5
23	Colossians; 1 Timothy		6:6-49
24	1 Timothy		7:1-8:15
25	Ezra; Haggai; Zechariah		8:16-9-45
26	Zecheriah; Nehemiah; Baruch		9:46-10:24
27	Jonah; Malachi; Joel		10:25-11:28
28	Romans		11:29-12:12
29			12:13.:..13:9
30			13:10-14:11
31			14:12-16:15
32	Wisdom		17:1-18:8
33	1 and 2 Maccabees		18:35-20:40
34	Daniel		21:1-36

Table II

Order for the Readings for the Weekdays in Ordinary Time: Year Ii

Week	First Reading	Gospel Reading	
1	1 Samuel	Mark	1:14-2:17
2			2:18-3:19
3	2 Samuel		3:22-4:34
4	2 Samuel; 1 Kings 1-16		5:1-6:30
5	1 Kings 1-16		6:53-8:10
6	James		8:11-9:13
7			9:14-10:16
8	1 Peter; Jude		10:17-11:33
9	2 Peter; 2 Timothy		12:1-12:44
10	1 Kings 17-22	Matthew	5:1-37
11	1 Kings 17-22; 2 Kings		5:38-6:34
12	2 Kings; Lamentations		7:1-8:17
13	Amos		8: 1&:-9:17
14	Hosea; Isaiah		9:18-10:33
15	Isaiah; Micah		10:34-12:21
16	Micah; Jeremiah		12:38-13:30
17	Jeremiah		13:31-14:12
18	Numbers; Deuteronomy		14:13-17:20
19	Ezekiel		17:22-19:15
20			19:16-23:12
21	2 Thessalonians; 1 Corinthians		23:13-25:30
22	1 Corinthians	Luke	4:16-6:5
23			6:6-49
24			7:1-8:15
25	Proverbs; Ecclesiastes		8:16-9-45
26	Job		9:46-10:24
27	Galatians		10:25-11:28
28	Galatians; Ephesians		11:29-12:12
29	Ephesians		12:13.:..13:9
30			13:10-14:11
31	Ephesians; Philippians		14:12-16:15
32	Titus; Philemon; 2 and 3 John		17:1-18:8
33	Apocalypse		18:35-20:40
34			21:1-36